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Senate

The Senate met at 12:02 p.m., and was called to order by the Honorable LARRY E. CRAIG, a Senator from the State of Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Norris A. Keirn, National Chaplain of the American Legion.

PRAYER

The guest chaplain offered the following prayer:

Eternal Father, You have been our shield and strength from the birth of our Nation to this present day. Our homeland has been preserved in the palm of Your hand. By inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, we have continuously moved to develop a more perfect union that would mirror Your divine purpose.

Through Your guidance, these Senators have been raised to make laws and direct efforts for the enduring betterment of the peoples of this Nation and the world. Grant great wisdom so that Your righteous purposes would be fulfilled. Afford each one the strength of will to be diligent dispensers of truth and justice. Bless them with solidarity that transcends personal views and political affiliations. Grant a bipartisan unity that would bring You glory!

Bless also those who defend this democracy and place themselves in harm's way. Dispatch Your angels to protect and to bring them home with victory over the evil forces that would attempt to destroy freedom. Enable them to break the bondage of oppression as You have so graciously granted in the past. In the Name of our Lord we pray, Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LARRY E. CRAIG led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 3, 2003.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LARRY E. CRAIG, a Senator from the State of Idaho, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CRAIG thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore. (Mr. CHAMBLISS assumed the chair.)

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, the Senate will spend the day in executive session trying to reach an agreement for a time to vote on the Estrada nomination. The nomination has been pending before the full Senate since February 5. The majority leader has attempted on a number of occasions to reach a time certain for this nomination. Each time there has been an objection by the other side of the aisle.

If Members desire to speak, they are encouraged to do so during today's session.

As a reminder to all Members, there will be a rollcall vote today beginning at 5:30. Under the unanimous consent agreement reached last Thursday, the vote will be on the confirmation of Marian Blank Horn to serve on the

U.S. Court of Federal Claims. I thank all Members for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MIGUEL A. ESTRADA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT (Resumed)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now go into executive session and resume consideration of executive calendar No. 21, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Miguel A. Estrada, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant minority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. The manager of the bill is on the floor and the acting leader, Senator CRAIG, is also here. Senator BINGAMAN is here and wishes to speak. I understand Senator CRAIG wishes to speak for about 15 minutes. I wonder if I may direct attention to the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Chairman HATCH. Senator BINGAMAN is here and I would like to see if we can get him in the queue to speak after Senator CRAIG. I know the Senator from Utah is managing this bill and, of course, I am sure he wishes to speak. I wonder if he has any objection to Mr. BINGAMAN speaking.

Mr. HATCH. I have no objection.

Mr. REID. He only wants about 5 to 10 minutes.

Mr. HATCH. I will have no objection, and I have no objection to Senator CRAIG speaking as well.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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